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New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 41

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.3)

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at this plenary meeting on agenda item 41, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The Group of 77 and China has always been firmly against the embargo. At the second South Summit, held in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 16 June 2005, heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries. They called on the Government of the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. That embargo, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter and international law and to the principle of good-neighbourliness, causes huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate once again its long-standing position on this important matter. At their recently held thirty-fourth annual meeting, which took place on 28 September at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Group of 77 and China,

> "firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten freedom of trade and investment. They therefore called on the international community to neither recognize these measures nor apply them." (*A/65/486, annex, para. 69*)

The Group of 77 and China notes the communications from Governments and organs and agencies of the United Nations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 64/6 (A/65/83). Sadly, they demonstrate unequivocally that the embargo remains largely unchanged and continues to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. Furthermore, the deepening impact of the global economic crisis on

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Cuba, along with the continued embargo by the Government of the United States, will further aggravate the hardships that the people of Cuba are experiencing.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the United States to heed the international community's increasing calls to bring an end to the five-decade embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sisterly country. The embargo frustrates efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and negatively affects regional cooperation in the area.

The Group of 77 and China are committed to working towards a better world for all in which nations, large and small, can peacefully coexist. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence among States requires adherence by all to the cardinal principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful conduct of relations among nations.

The Group of 77 and China will again fully support the draft resolution against the embargo (A/65/L.3) and urges all Member States to do so as well.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, given the long list of speakers inscribed on my list, I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item now be closed. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly today on behalf of the 118 Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and to start by extending a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and expressing to him the Movement's full support.

Two days ago, on 24 October, we celebrated United Nations Day, the anniversary of the day on which the Organization officially came into existence 65 years ago, when 50 nations, big and small, jointly proclaimed their resolve to realize a set of noble aims based on timeless values and undying ideals and decided to eternalize them in the United Nations Charter. Today, the Non-Aligned Movement once again reaffirms its unwavering commitment to uphold, preserve and promote those principles and to ensure the continued viability of all the provisions of international law, which together constitute the very essence of our multilateral work and guide our collective efforts to maintain international peace and security, achieve lasting economic growth and sustainable development and ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is in that context that the Non-Aligned Movement finds it disturbing that unilateral measures and laws of a coercive nature are still being adopted and implemented against countries of the Movement — measures and laws that prevent them from exercising their right to freely decide their own political systems and the economic and social regimes of their preference. We cannot but firmly reject such violations of multilateralism and call for their immediate end. We also appeal to all States to refrain from recognizing such measures or laws and to support the claim of affected countries to compensation for any damage incurred as a result of this breach of internationally agreed norms of conduct.

This year, the President of the General Assembly has wisely chosen as the theme for the Assembly's sixty-fifth session "Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance". But that can only happen if all countries of the United Nations respect the rules that govern multilateralism and refrain from taking measures that defy the principles of the Charter, the norms of international law and respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, good-neighbourliness and mutual trust. The embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba undoubtedly runs counter to those principles and raises many questions. How can a country put up obstacles to the freedom of commerce of one of its neighbours when it continuously calls for nations to trade freely? How can a country impose limits on the right of its people to travel when it strongly advocates the freedom of movement? The Non-Aligned Movement is bewildered by those apparent contradictions and believes that they should be promptly rectified.

To that end, the United States should once and for all end its embargo against Cuba. It is the longest and toughest system of sanctions that the United States has ever applied against any country throughout its history. This is not only the demand of Cuba or of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, as clearly expressed by their heads of State and Government at the

Movement's fifteenth summit conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in July 2009; it is the demand of 187 countries of the United Nations, which last year voted in favour of resolution 64/6, the eighteenth resolution to be adopted by the Assembly on the issue. We once again urge the United States to immediately and fully comply with all General Assembly resolutions calling for the immediate end of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

I am sure that members will agree with me that there is no need for a detailed exposé of the damage that the embargo is causing to the economic and social development of Cuba and to the welfare of its people. We are all aware of the detrimental repercussions of the embargo, not only on the financial, banking, trade, investment and tourism sectors of the Cuban economy but also on health, nutrition, water quality, education and culture. The evidence on the ground is a stark reminder of what the embargo has done to Cuba. Furthermore, this unilateral blockade has an extended effect on companies and citizens from third countries. It thus violates the sovereign rights of many other countries. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo, which we consider an added argument in favour of the prompt elimination of those unjustified sanctions.

The Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement has stood here before the Assembly year after year and urged the United States to remain true to the words that the founding fathers of the United Nations clearly inscribed in the Charter by taking the necessary steps to swiftly lift the embargo it is imposing against Cuba. In a period increasingly characterized by international cooperation to address challenges to our very existence and to ensure the welfare of our peoples, maintaining the embargo seems to be part of an era long gone. The United States Administration should now more than ever match its statements about openness and engagement with the outside world to actions that would be welcomed by the international community, which will soon vote in favour of the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the embargo on Cuba (A/65/L.3). The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to send this message to the United States: end the blockade now. I express the expectation that this time our call will not go unheard.

Mr. Bowler (Malawi): It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly. Let me join my colleague who spoke before me to add Malawi's voice and that of the Group of African States to the call regarding the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, which has been on the United Nations agenda for the past 18 years.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, the continent of Africa and as Chair of the African Union, I reiterate the decision of the fifteenth Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, which met in Kampala, Uganda, on 27 July 2010. On taking a decision on the issue of sanctions on Cuba, the African Union called upon the Government of the United States of America to remove the long-standing and unjustifiable economic and trade embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba, thereby enabling that country to enjoy all the legitimate prospects for its sustained development, which is long overdue.

In his address before a plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 23 September 2010, His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi and Chairman of the African Union, stated categorically that sanctions have caused great economic hardship, especially for the poor and vulnerable in targeted countries, including Cuba. On behalf of the African Union, he challenged those concerned to promote social progress and better standards of life, as set forth in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. We in Africa believe that it is now time to give dialogue a chance and allow Cuba to continue to effectively contribute its fair share to global development, and the United States should lift its long-standing embargo.

The countries of Africa, like the majority of the countries and Member States of the United Nations, as can be seen from the voting trend over the years in the General Assembly, are of the view that it is high time that the embargo on the people of Cuba were lifted, considering that it has now been 50 years since it was imposed on the innocent people of that country. Children born after 1960, who are now men and women, have not known anything else except the embargo on this beautiful country that has so much potential and goodwill.

It is time for change. Now is the time. The African Group and the African Union have the confidence that President Obama's Administration can and should bring this change. Once again, the African Group, the African Union and indeed Malawi call for the immediate lifting of the embargo on beautiful Cuba.

Ms. Bethel (Bahamas): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which also aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Egypt, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we have done in the past, CARICOM member States continue to reiterate their unequivocal opposition to the United States imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has been opposed by the overwhelming majority of the international community for the past 18 consecutive years. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter. The embargo itself runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade, which this body traditionally champions.

The stubborn persistence of the embargo is apparently impervious to the sustained chorus of international criticism or to the logic of a world that has changed immeasurably over the past four and a half decades since the imposition of the blockade. The embargo has now outlived the Cold War by 19 years. It has outlasted the terms of eight Presidents of the United States and that of Cuban President Fidel Castro. Over 70 per cent of Cubans alive today were born under the embargo. CARICOM considers the embargo an anachronism that has succeeded only in contributing to the suffering of generations of ordinary Cubans and in unnecessarily increasing tensions between the United States and Cuba. It serves no justifiable legal, political or moral purpose in the twenty-first century.

The punitive embargo is of particular concern to CARICOM, which shares a history, culture and sisterhood with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State of the Caribbean region and an integral part of the pan Caribbean process. Caribbean ties with Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. The member States of CARICOM continue to maintain close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in areas including trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development. In many ways, our future regional development depends upon our collective advancement and progress. In that context, we view the embargo not just as a punitive act against Cuba but as an impediment to our shared regional development.

This year's report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 64/6 (A/65/83), like previous reports on this matter, outlines responses from an overwhelming majority of Member States that share a common perspective as to the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General demonstrates that the embargo even affects the manner in which organs and agencies of the United Nations system carry out their work in Cuba. CARICOM States therefore reaffirm the positions of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement in opposing such unilateral actions. We maintain the position that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations remain the only acceptable means for advancing long-term peace stability.

The annual resolution, which has been repeatedly adopted by the General Assembly, also constitutes a blot on the credibility and efficacy of the United Nations. There is probably no single issue on which the United Nations has made such sustained, strong and unambiguous pronouncements. Yet the embargo continues, in the face of overwhelming international reproach. CARICOM believes that the President of the General Assembly should explore additional mechanisms to operationalize the words of the resolution. The continued disregard for the will of the General Assembly will only complicate the President's stated goal of improving the role of the United Nations in matters of global governance.

The significance of the embargo on the Cuban economy continues to be of great concern to CARICOM. The humanitarian impact on the people of Cuba, especially in the area of health care and food, is especially saddening. The inability of Cuba to acquire necessary medical equipment, spare parts and the latest generation medications because of the embargo continues to affect the health-care system, where treatment remains free of charge to the Cuban people.

With the strengthening and more frequent storms and hurricanes wrought by climate change and Cuba's geographic susceptibility to these natural disasters, the unacceptable humanitarian impact of the embargo becomes even more acute. Additionally, construction materials and heavy equipment are becoming increasingly inaccessible to Cuba because of stringent rules regarding origin and restrictions against corporations based outside of the United States. The negative effects on the Cuban economy and its growth are obvious and tangible. The embargo has now cost Cuba almost $100 billion since it was imposed in 1962.

It is remarkable that, even as Cuba struggles with the recent unfortunate string of natural disasters and the continued impacts of the global economic crisis, it continues to assist other nations in the developing world, starting with its immediate Caribbean neighbours. Thousands of Caribbean students have attended Cuban universities without charge. Thousands have received free surgery and medical assistance in Cuba. And thousands more have been treated in their home countries by Cuban doctors and nurses. We have benefited from technical expertise, capacity-building programmes, infrastructure assistance and from the selfless generosity of the Cuban people. The people of Cuba have threatened no one, and neither the embargo nor its deleterious side effects has prevented them from continually extending a hand of friendship and solidarity, even across ideological divides.

Given Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance, it should not be isolated or excluded from participation in regional and hemispheric processes. CARICOM reiterates its unwavering support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination, in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development. We call once again for the end to an embargo that has preserved a state of tension between two neighbouring countries and generated concern, disquiet and discomfort throughout the Caribbean.

CARICOM States continue to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. Those two neighbours, a mere 90 miles apart, have produced great scholars, scientists and global leaders. The two countries possess proud and noble histories, and are populated by friendly, open and loving peoples. As such, in spite of a long history of dashed hopes, CARICOM continues to believe that a new beginning is possible in the relationship between the Governments of Cuba and the United States.

However, we consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite of any meaningful rapprochement between the two countries, not a negotiated end result. While there have been some recent positive indications of flexibility, there have also been reminders of unilateral rigidity.

We remain guardedly optimistic that the United States recent recommitment to multilateralism will result in an increased willingness to consider the opinions and concerns of its global friends and partners. On this issue, global opinion can hardly be conveyed in a more convincing or consistent manner. As such, our faith in the recent pronouncements of the United States Government carries with it an expectation that these few remaining historical and unilateral wrongs will be righted expeditiously.

It is within this context that CARICOM States unstintingly support the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba (A/65/L.3).

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member States of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and Venezuela, a State that is in the process of joining the bloc. The associated States of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I would like to express a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

MERCOSUR was founded on the principles of solidarity, interdependence and good-neighbourly relations. We believe that tolerance is the basis for the historic convergence in our continent of peoples from every corner of the world. We are joined with our Latin American neighbours by the desire to live in peace, promote mutual understanding, defend the independence, equality and sovereignty of States and promote respect for international law. These ideals have historically guided the relationship among Latin American States and societies and are enshrined in the charter of the Organization of American States.

In that regard, we have welcomed efforts and decisions taken last year, including the easing of travel restrictions, the removal of limits on remittances and the relaxation of conditions for sending packages. However, it is nevertheless unfortunate that further steps in that direction have not been applied recently, that the embargo against Cuba continues unchanged and that conditions are once again being placed along the path towards greater openness and direct dialogue.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the embargo against Cuba is contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that it contravenes the rules of international law, in particular in relation to the equality of States, the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and the peaceful solution of conflicts. Moreover, the embargo is contrary to the principles of justice and human rights, for it punishes an entire innocent population for no apparent reason.

We reject on principle unilateral and extraterritorial measures that cause irreparable harm to the welfare of peoples and obstruct the process of regional integration.

We once again reaffirm our unequivocal support for the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.3). MERCOSUR and its associate States reiterate their commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate tool for resolving disputes and as an effective way to promote international cooperation and understanding among peoples.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is just another example of an outdated policy that does not belong in today's world. By adopting the draft resolution before us, the General Assembly will bear witness once again to its resolute political will in defence of the ideals of freedom, solidarity and respect for sovereignty and international law.

Ms. Rovirosa (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): For 19 consecutive years, the Government of Mexico has come to this forum to reiterate its rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to reaffirm its opposition to the use of coercive actions that have no legal foundation in the United Nations Charter.

In 1992, the Government of the Republic of Cuba submitted a draft resolution for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly in order to put an end to the embargo imposed by the Government of the United States. Ever since, Mexico has come to this forum to reaffirm its long-standing position of principle that any kind of political, economic or military sanctions to be imposed on States can flow only from decisions or recommendations made by the General Assembly or the Security Council once they have determined that such actions are necessary in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law.

Mexico believes that unilateral measures applied in an extraterritorial fashion on third-party countries have severe humanitarian consequences, in open contradiction of the goals that supposedly drive them. Moreover, such measures also signal the abandonment of diplomacy and dialogue as appropriate ways of resolving disputes among States.

Multilateralism, respect for international law and for the rules and principles that regulate coexistence between nations, as well as respectful dialogue remain the best way to resolve disputes, guarantee peaceful coexistence among States and ensure an international climate of peace.

Various organs and entities of the United Nations system have noted the negative impact that the embargo has on Cuba's economic and social development, as evident in the economic, commercial and financial transactions that this country undertakes. They have also noted the damaging effects on sensitive areas that have a direct impact on the lives of Cuba's people, as well as the indirect repercussions on third-party countries owing to the impossibility of interacting with Cuba when it comes to many economic and social activities.

That is why Mexico has always supported all initiatives against the embargo and unilateral measures in various forums, at the United Nations and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as well as in others such as the Organization of American States, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, the Ibero American Summit and the Rio Group. We will continue to support Cuba's inclusion in global economic, commercial and financial dialogue and trade mechanisms in line with that country's own

desire and sovereign decisions, so as to foster cooperation and development.

The Government of Mexico bases its bilateral and multilateral relations on the overarching principles of international law that govern peaceful and civilized coexistence among sovereign States in the modern world. Those principles have preserved the same solidarity and continuity over time in the relations between Mexico and Cuba, two States that have maintained steadfast historical ties in an atmosphere of renewed trust and unfailingly following the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Based on what I have said here, Mexico reiterates that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America on Cuba must come to end, given that the embargo is based on a policy that, extended for almost half a century, has affected the people of Cuba in a silent, systematic and cumulative manner. Mexico believes that the observance of international law and the rules and principles governing coexistence among nations, as well as respectful dialogue irrespective of imbalances or differences, are necessary tools for overcoming differences between States and for ensuring a climate of international peace.

From our own experience we know that societies evolve and change according to their own circumstances, and not as the result of arbitrary or coercive measures imposed from outside. In the light of this, the Mexican Government again reiterates its firm commitment to contributing actively and decisively to the rule of international law as it pertains to this item on the General Assembly's agenda. We will support the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) that has been proposed at this session.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the report of the Secretary-General submitted under this agenda item (A/65/83). The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 18 consecutive years, by an overwhelming majority, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions urging all countries, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, to repeal or invalidate all laws and measures with extraterritorial effect that compromise the sovereignty of other States, undermine the legitimate rights and interests of entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of those States and affect the freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, those resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba imposed by the country concerned is yet to be lifted. This constitutes a serious violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, adversely affects normal commercial and trade exchanges between Cuba and other countries and impedes the operations of the agencies of the United Nations system in Cuba. What is more, it also seriously undermines the Cuban people's rights to survival and development.

The information obtained from Governments and international organizations in the Secretary-General's report shows that over the past year the economic embargo against Cuba has remained substantially unchanged. It thus continues to inflict enormous economic and financial losses on Cuba, which immeasurably limit the Cuban people's efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic and social development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The international community is now faced with multiple serious challenges posed by the financial, food and energy crises, as well as climate change, making the embargo and sanctions against Cuba all the more unreasonable.

China pursues an independent and peaceful foreign policy, and is committed to developing friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. We are of the view that every sovereign State is entitled to independently choose its own suitable social system and path to development. No country has the right to unilaterally impose military, political, economic or other forms of sanctions on other countries. Experience shows that sanctions usually fail to achieve their expected results; on the contrary, they may end up victimizing civilians, in particular the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

In today's world, multilateralism and the democratization of international relations have taken root in people's hearts, while openness, cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win progress have become the consensus of the international community. When

disputes arise, dialogue on an equal footing, with friendly consultation, represents the best path to a settlement. The Chinese Government has always maintained that countries should develop their relations in compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

It is always our hope that in State-to-State relations, dialogue will replace confrontation, and engagement and exchange will replace embargoes and sanctions. The Chinese Government urges the country concerned to terminate its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible. In this connection, China will support the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) that has been submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela aligns itself with the statements made this morning by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the Southern Common Market. I would like, however, to raise the voice of my country at this historic moment.

During the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the overwhelming majority of Member States voted in favour of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has lasted a half century and seeks to limit the right of the Cuban people to decide their own destiny. Those countries forcefully call for respect of the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples and strongly condemn threats to the political independence of States, as inconsistent with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Will the imperialist Government of the United States continue to ignore the will of this Assembly, which has repeatedly condemned the blockade against our sister Republic of Cuba? In reaffirming its long-standing commitment to the values of humanism and solidarity among peoples, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela rejects the aggression against the Cuban people, which undermines the peaceful coexistence of nations and international law.

The change of administration in the United States generated great expectations for a new policy that would respect the sovereignty of nations. There is nothing, however, that suggests that there have been substantial changes in the foreign policy of the United States, in particular with regard to the blockade against Cuba. The United States Government continues to ignore the voices of the peoples of the world, which demand the end of that genocidal policy as a violation of the most basic human rights.

It is noteworthy that the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts, which prevent Cuban trade with United States companies and their subsidiaries in third countries, continue to be in force. Through the extraterritorial application of United States legislation, the blockade affects the legitimate interests of any sovereign State that legitimately decides to become a business partner of the Republic of Cuba.

The devastating collateral damage inflicted each day on the brotherly people of the island by the blockade policy is unjustifiable. As noted by the American Association for World Health, the blockade would cause a massive humanitarian disaster in Cuba if that nation did not have an extraordinary public health system. The blockade against Cuba has diverse impacts on the daily lives of women and men, children and the elderly. It manifests itself harshly in the way it affects the quality of life of children with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, who must do without the standard treatment for this disease. The blockade also makes it difficult for people to enjoy their housing rights. It hinders the import of building materials needed to replace and repair the huge number of buildings damaged by hurricanes. The blockade causes millions in losses each year in Cuba's basic industries, sugar, steelwork and tourism.

In short, the blockade represents a repeated and unilateral denial by a signatory to the United Nations Charter of the right to development of another Member State and its people, without the aggrieved State ever having committed aggression of any kind against the aggressor State. And what is the reason for the recurring hostility against the Cuban people? The answer was given by Ernesto Che Guevara on 9 April 1961, when he said that the heroic Cuban people had risen up against the "despotic rule of imperialism, which crushes national identity, insults patriotic feeling and colonizes the economy". The heroism of the Cuban people is, therefore, an example of the struggle for dignity and sovereignty of nations. The imperialists have not been able and will not be able to break that patriotic spirit.

Despite the criminal blockade, the Cuban Government and people have provided extraordinary support to the plans and programmes developed in Venezuela to achieve social justice. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to express its gratitude for that invaluable solidarity.

This is a special day at the United Nations. We are discussing an issue of cardinal importance to the peoples of the world. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly embraces the sovereignty, independence and dignity of nations, and therefore we strongly support the draft resolution presented by our sister Republic of Cuba (A/65/L.3), which again demands the suspension of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba.

Mr. Khazee (Islamic Republic of Iran): The Islamic Republic of Iran subscribes to the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China on the subject under consideration. We would also like to cordially welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba to this meeting. Many of the rights of nations and people are of an economic and social nature. Attempts to deprive people and countries of those rights infringe on their basic human rights and are therefore illegitimate. Indeed, that is the main feature of sanctions as we know them today.

Economic blockades and sanctions have to be viewed as illegitimate for at least the following reasons: First, there is no single case where certain Powers have not been behind economic sanctions against developing countries or territories. Sanctions have turned out to be a tool, not to spur international peace and security but to impose hegemonic intentions of big Powers against other countries and populations. Therefore, the imposition or prolongation of sanctions or their extension against any State under the pretext of securing international peace and security but with the real aim of achieving the political objectives of one or a few States is deplorable. Secondly, worst of all, sanctions always end up targeting the daily lives of ordinary people. They have a dramatic impact on rights recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. For instance, they often cause significant disruption in the distribution of food, pharmaceuticals and sanitation supplies, jeopardize the quality of food and the availability of clean drinking water, severely interfere with the functioning of basic health and education systems, and undermine the right to work.

The victimization of innocent civilians in instances where sanctions have been imposed, including ostensibly legitimate ones, remains a matter of serious concern and dismay. There is ample evidence that sanctions, first and foremost, put the economic growth and prosperity of people in peril. They are simply misguidedly punitive. Thirdly, notwithstanding all the harm that sanctions cause, they have also proven to be futile. There is no strong proof that independent countries compromise their revered national interests and yield to the antagonistic wills of hegemonic Powers because of sanctions. Fourthly, the argument that sanctions are a better option than more forceful measures has also proven to be irrelevant. Certain Powers are not concerned about the consequences of punitive measures, nor do they conform in their actions to the provisions of the United Nations Charter. They make their cases independently of the concerns of the international community and tend to misuse the available means in the Charter to address their narrowly defined interests. Whenever they deem it necessary, they without fail resort to force, with or without first exercising sanctions or other non-violent measures and with or without United Nations approval. Sanctions will not stop them from exercising force, should they themselves find it desirable.

Yet, the most unjustifiable and deplorable form of sanctions is the imposition of unilateral blockades and extraterritorial application of domestic laws by one State, which happens, unsurprisingly, to be the United States of America. Such actions against others have an effect not only on the population under sanctions but also on the interests of the third parties, who are disproportionately and unreasonably being punished. Numerous international documents have asked for the swift invalidation of all such measures. This Hall has witnessed during the past 19 years the overwhelming support of the international community and countries — coming from every region and part of the world — to the call made through 18 resolutions so far to annul the inhumane and futile measures imposed against the Government and people of Cuba.

Indeed, one may wonder what more could be done to convince the United States to lift the economic blockade. What more could be said to argue that those illegal measures flagrantly violate the United Nations

Charter, the rule of international law, the multilateral trading system, the norms and principles governing relations among States, as well as the clear will of the international community? That will has been unequivocally expressed in so many resolutions adopted by this body.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has lasted for decades, serves no purpose other than to inflict tremendous hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children. The embargo has seriously jeopardized the legitimate rights and interests of Cuba and other States. The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of international law and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures continue to adversely affect the living conditions and human rights of the Cuban people and to hamper the efforts of the Cuban Government to achieve its development goals — in particular the eradication of poverty and hunger and the promotion of health and education — as indispensable means for achieving economic and social development.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly rejects and opposes the application of unilateral economic and trade measures imposed by one State against another, as well as the extraterritorial application and effects of national legislation on the sovereignty of other States. We oppose and condemn such measures and laws and their continued application. We will do everything to effectively thwart them and urge other States to do likewise by refraining from recognizing, adopting or implementing extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures and arbitrary travel restrictions that seek to exert pressure on other countries — threatening their sovereignty and independence and their freedom of trade and investment and preventing them from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will.

The Islamic Republic of Iran shares the concerns of the Cuban people and Government and therefore emphasizes the urgent need to put an end to such measures against Cuba and other developing countries and calls for the full implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

In conclusion, sanctions, whoever imposes them under whatever pretext or disguise, continue to be illegitimate, futile and misguidedly punitive.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): Algeria aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I would also like to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Algeria would like to reiterate that it is deeply concerned by the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed against Cuba by the United States of America for nearly half a century. The consecutive annual adoption by almost all members of the General Assembly of a resolution, virtually the same each year, calling for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba reflects the profound will of the international community to put an end to that situation, which has lasted far too long.

In accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, Algeria has always condemned the imposition of extraterritorial applications of laws and all forms of coercive economic and trade measures, such as the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which contradicts international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Every Member State should respect the principles of the Charter, including, in particular, the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of any other State.

It is a fact that that blockade is causing huge material loss and economic damage to Cuba. It is also negatively affecting the well-being of the Cuban people on a daily basis. Those consequences are exacerbated by the adverse effects of the current global economic and financial crisis, which have seriously compromised Cuba's development efforts, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83), based on information provided by 134 Governments and 25 organs and agencies of the United Nations system, on the implementation of resolution 64/6.

It is important to recall the long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement on the issue, confirmed again at the fifteenth summit, which rejected the use of

economic measures of coercion and extraterritorial applications of law imposed on developing countries. The heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement also urged the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, in strict compliance with the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on that issue, adopted annually since 1992.

Therefore, it is with conviction that Algeria will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted, A/65/L.3, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): For almost 50 years, the people of Cuba have suffered as a result of the economic, commercial and financial blockade by the United States of America, which is a major hindrance to the development of Cuba. That blockade constitutes a violation of international law, and its imposition shows disregard for the noble and abiding principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The international community has consistently opposed the embargo against Cuba. The unity with which the international community reacted to that embargo when it condemned it with a record vote of 187 to 3 in 2009 is testimony to the outright rejection of that unilateral act, which has gone on for far too long and must come to an end.

In that regard, South Africa supports the draft resolution before us (A/65/L.3), entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We do so because that relentless and unilateral action has caused untold suffering to the people of Cuba.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Malawi on behalf of the African Group. We also wish to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and, through him, our fraternal greetings to the loving people of Cuba.

For South Africa and its people, together with our entire region, we continue to be humbled by the historic role that Cuba played in our liberation and freedom. True to their commitment to international solidarity, justice, freedom and equality, the people of Cuba did not stand by as spectators when others were oppressed. For that reason, we owe it to Cuba and its people to join the progressive forces of the world and unequivocally condemn the continued illegal embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

South Africa has repeatedly joined the majority of countries in expressing its disagreement with and opposition to the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. In so doing, South Africa has been guided by the basic norms of international law and conduct in its principled support for the need to eliminate punitive economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion. South Africa views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as a violation of the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

In spite of that embargo, the Cuban people have extended a hand of friendship and solidarity to other people around the world. Cuba's outstanding work in the areas of health, education and biotechnology in the developing world, particularly in Africa, is recognized by the international community. South Africa and Cuba have maintained long-standing cordial relations, which continue to expand through increased cooperation on a wide range of issues, including economic, commercial and financial collaboration. The South Africa-Cuba Joint Consultative Mechanism and the South Africa-Cuba Joint Bilateral Commission continue to serve as strategic platforms for the expression of our strong bilateral relations.

We all, without exception, acknowledged the hardship that we and our respective peoples have faced after the onset of the financial crisis, which to date continues to endure. The extremely harsh global financial and economic crisis, as well as the embargo, only worsen the fate of the Cuban people and stifle the outstanding contribution by Cuba to the economic and social development of the poor. The international community should, therefore, take meaningful steps to free the Cuban people from the devastating effects of the embargo.

South Africa calls on the United States to end its unilateral isolation of Cuba. We urge the United States to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Cuba. We further call for accelerated action to dismantle the unjust sanctions regime against Cuba. Our collective

message should, therefore, be loud and clear to the United States, namely, that it should end its embargo and sanctions.

South Africa reiterates its support for the draft resolution before us today, and calls on all States to refrain from recognizing the unilateral coercive measures and laws that defy the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): In contributing to the debate on agenda item 41 concerning the necessity of ending the embargo imposed against Cuba since 1961, the delegation of Indonesia wishes to associate itself with the statement of the Group of 77 and China delivered earlier by the representative of Yemen and with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement delivered by the representative of Egypt.

Yet again, the General Assembly has been convened to consider the impact of the 50 year economic, commercial and financial embargo that was unilaterally imposed on Cuba during the long Cold War of the twentieth century. Although unilaterally imposed, the embargo has also impacted the economic and commercial relations of third countries. Much has changed since the initial imposition of the embargo. The world of 2010 is very different from that of 1961. Even with the impact of recent crises on the global economy, nations have opted to work together to overcome the difficulties created by those crises. That testifies to the fact that globalization has created the conditions for true global solidarity and partnership among nations. The embargo against Cuba runs contrary to that spirit of unity and solidarity, which is taking root in the world today.

Viewed from the perspective of the United Nations Charter and international law, the embargo lacks fairness and respect for the equality that should exist among and between sovereign States. The Charter is clear on the need for nations to develop friendly relations among themselves. It is equally emphatic about the need for nations to refrain from actions that will threaten the political independence of others or lead to intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of a particular State.

The embargo infringes on those principles. It has a sharp political edge, which undermines relations between the main parties. Instead of a dialogue to resolve differences, what we have is an unwanted stand-off that does not allow for an exchange of views to normalize relations. Not only does the embargo give rise to political complications, but the economic, commercial and financial hardships that it causes can hardly be justified on any humanitarian ground. It is a great burden for any developing country, whose people would benefit so much more from cooperation than from confrontation.

Indonesia remains steadfast in its opposition to the embargo imposed unilaterally against Cuba. While it is true that some small meaningful changes in the embargo have occurred in recent times, such as the easing of travel restrictions to Cuba and the removal of obstacles to the transfer of remittances, the preferred resolution to the dispute is certainly for the embargo to be lifted completely. The time is ripe for relations between the two main parties to be transformed through constructive engagement.

Lifting the embargo would also be in keeping with the spirit of the times. It would demonstrate unambiguously respect for the principle of non-intervention, as embodied in the United Nations Charter and international law. Cuba would then be able to exercise its right to develop, unhindered by restrictions to its trade and other business activities. The tensions that now exist between the two nations would also dissolve.

It is Indonesia's hope that in the near future we will see a thawing of the frosty relations that now keep those two important neighbouring States apart. We believe that it is time for peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I take the floor to speak on agenda item 41, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". My delegation begins first of all by associating this statement with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77.

For the last 19 years, resolutions on lifting the 51-year embargo on Cuba have come before this Assembly. Likewise, the international community annually pronounces on the resolution, calling for the lifting of the embargo. The embargo continues to be cloaked in such an ideological suit that opportunities to relax and bring about its lifting continue to elude us.

It is even sadder that that is happening between geographical neighbours. We continue to witness Cuba trying to adapt to the challenge of living under trying

circumstances without asking for a lighter burden. We continue to be deeply touched by that, as new generations born into the embargo take on the responsibility before them with a common sense of purpose. That testifies to a committed population, with a host of approaches aimed at cutting up the huge challenge into bits and pieces and managing those challenges within their own means.

My delegation hopes that the principle of good-neighbourliness will win the day and that the people of our partner country, the United States, will restore, renew, revive, reclaim and redeem friendship and respect for Cuba's sovereignty within the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter.

At the end of the day, it is people who remain at the centre of the Charter of the United Nations, which begins with the words "We the peoples". We members of the United Nations must continue to give humanity a chance. We must continue to do what is necessary in the name of peace and security and in the preservation of the rights of the Cuban people to development. The imposition of the embargo is stuck in time, and we must not leave it to time or chance to see change. Rather, it is up to us, the Member States, to effect that change by calling for the lifting of the blockade. Our action on that noble request is also a declaration of our character, our wish to reach out to all.

Therefore, Solomon Islands closes by calling for the unconditional lifting of the blockade against the Cuban people and replacing it with genuine dialogue and cooperation. In the spirit of friendship and outreach to all, we call for carrying out that humble request in the name of humanity.

Mr. Raja (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report on the agenda item under consideration today (A/65/83).

This is the nineteenth year in succession that this Assembly has been deliberating the almost five-decade-old economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. In all those years, this Assembly has repeatedly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, which hurt the progress and prosperity of the people the world over.

The General Assembly has also called upon all States to respect their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law and to repeal and invalidate laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States and affect the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and on the freedom of trade and navigation. Despite the repeated calls of the General Assembly, its resolutions remain unimplemented, in contravention of world opinion. Such callous disregard of the will of the United Nations undermines the credibility of this body and weakens multilateralism.

Meanwhile, more importantly, the Cuban people continue to face the hardships induced by the embargo in their daily lives. The embargo and its extraterritorial aspects continue to remain in full force. In particular, domestic United States laws, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, have enhanced the extraterritorial reach of the embargo, encompassing foreign companies and foreign subsidiaries of United States companies doing business with Cuba or Cuban entities.

The embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, is adversely affecting the lives of the Cuban people and their efforts to move forward with the socio economic development of their country. The embargo has denied Cuba access to United States markets, investment, technology, financial services and scientific, educational, cultural and sports institutions. In the past five decades, Cuba has had to pay enormous extra costs to obtain products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometres away. The extraterritorial application of the United States embargo has discouraged investment, technology and its transfer and sale, and other forms of business collaboration between Cuba and third countries.

Health care, one of the commitments of the Millennium Development Goals, is particularly affected owing to the continuous denial of critical medical equipment, medicines, technologies and diagnostic aids to Cuban hospitals. Cuba's efforts to provide health assistance to fellow developing countries as part of South-South cooperation has also suffered from the embargo, making that yet another

unexpected negative extraterritorial impact of the embargo.

In the report of the Secretary-General, various United Nations entities have detailed the impact of the embargo and its extraterritorial effects. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Havana has noted the high cost and negative impact of the embargo on humanitarian and development cooperation implemented by the United Nations system in Cuba. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has stated that the embargo considerably affects the standard of living of Cuban citizens and may threaten Cuba's food security in the future.

The United Nations Development Programme has noted that the effects of the embargo can be observed in all spheres of Cuba's social and economic activities, including the lives of the most vulnerable. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has stated that the impact on trade of the extraterritorial application is considerable owing to significant United States interests in transnational corporations. In recent years, the financial, food and energy crises have made the impact of the embargo even more acute.

Geography indicates that there ought to be normal relations in trade and investment between Cuba and the United States of America. Despite the embargo, the United States continues to be a major source of food imports for Cuba, insofar as permitted by the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000. That only confirms the high potential for trade, commerce and investment between those countries.

People-to-people contact between the two countries remains severely curtailed. The lifting of United States travel restrictions on Cuba would bring immense benefits to the Cuban tourism sector and to its people. Congressional efforts in the United States to relax or lift the embargo and the substantial interest in United States business circles for unhindered access to the Cuban market lend further credence to the annual United Nations resolutions calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba.

Before concluding, permit me to reiterate India's opposition to unilateral measures by countries that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of a country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations.

India joins all other nations in calling for an immediate end to the United States embargo against Cuba. India supports the draft resolution moved by Cuba today (A/65/L.3).

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation welcomes the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, at today's discussion. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the issue before us (A/65/83). The opinions of the Member States presented in the document clearly show their disagreement with and objections to the introduction of the unilateral and exterritorial economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Russia's position of principle with respect to the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) is well known. Our country fully shares the view of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the international community in firmly rejecting the United States embargo against Cuba and in calling for its lifting as soon as possible. We are convinced that ending the embargo against Cuba and normalizing United States-Cuban relations would generally help to improve the island's situation. We believe that the maintenance of the commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States is counterproductive, anachronistic and not in keeping with current realities.

Last year, President Obama's Administration took steps to lift a number of restrictions on visits to Cuba by United States citizens who have relatives there and on monetary and postal transfers to Cubans from the United States, as well as steps to resume dialogue on migration issues. We therefore expect other actions that will improve relations between the two countries and, ultimately of course, put a complete end to the long obsolete commercial and economic embargo against Cuba.

For the time being, we feel that we must continue our policy of voting in favour of the draft resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo, guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures or interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): Zambia will vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, as we have done in the past and for the reasons listed in the statements by the representatives of Malawi on behalf of the African Group, of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, with which we would like to be associated.

On 12 June 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a statement that has remained indelibly etched in the history of the Cold War era. Addressing himself to the President of the Soviet Union, he said "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall", in reference to the Berlin Wall. Today, for the sake of the suffering people of Cuba, including women and children, we wish to make an earnest and simple appeal: President Obama, please do the right thing and lift the United States embargo against Cuba. It is time to be on the right side of history.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia): The Gambia wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the representatives of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of Malawi on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, my delegation joined members of the Assembly in calling for an immediate end to one of the most protracted political sanctions regime that the Assembly has ever known. We spoke in the hope that the opportunity had finally arrived for the embargo to become a thing of the past. To our bewilderment, the half-century-old regime is still intact, with occasional cosmetic tweaks made to resemble real change. Real change is long overdue.

At this year's general debate, the Gambia's Foreign Minister said:

> "The United States embargo against Cuba is one of the longest running political disputes that this Assembly has needed to address for almost two decades. It is embarrassing that such a cruel and outmoded form of settling scores in international relations is still in place. The embargo has no legitimacy or appeal, and it is time for those that imposed it to show genuine leadership by ending it." (*A/65/PV.20*)

In the coming months, we will look forward to the exercise of true leadership towards ending that penal regime.

The devastating effects of the embargo on the Government and people of Cuba are amply documented in the Secretary-General's report in document A/65/83. It is also clear that the United Nations system, too, is paying a heavy price in its activities with Cuba, especially when it comes to the travel of Cuban United Nations personnel, visa restrictions and higher procurement costs directly associated with the embargo.

Cuban agriculture is not spared. Cuban health care, medical and scientific research, educational cooperation, cultural exchanges and intellectual property rights are all adversely affected by the extraterritorial reach of the embargo.

Cuban companies, United States companies and third-country companies continue to be penalized for doing business in Cuba. Travel to Cuba continues to be restricted in ways that make the cost prohibitive because of cumbersome procedures that visitors are required to meet. Financial transactions between Cuba and other countries have also not been spared. The odious nature of that embargo is apparent to all. Its continuation therefore cannot serve any useful purpose.

Even children are not spared by the embargo. The Secretary-General's report highlights the hurdles encountered by United Nations agencies in the procurement of Ritonavir, a paediatric antiretroviral drug. It states that the HIV/AIDS programme has also been affected by the lack of procurement of the antiretroviral drugs used in children, Kaletra and Norvir, both produced by Abbott, which is a United States-based company.

The Cuba we know does not deserve those sanctions. It is a leader in humanitarian assistance around the world and in providing health care and education to millions all over the world. The Cuba we know is not a threat to any country's national security. The Cuba we know is a country that promotes friendly relations among its peoples and the countries of every region represented in this Assembly.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Government and people of the Gambia will today stand in solidarity with Cuba by voting for draft resolution A/65/L.3. It is once again our hope that those who impose and maintain that inhumane embargo will find it in their hearts to call for its total and unconditional lifting. It is time to consign the Helms-Burton Act and the Torricelli Act to the dustbin of history. A regime of

friendly relations and good-neighbourliness should finally replace them in the birth of a new era of Cuban-American relations. We call on other countries to support the draft resolution and to further support efforts to dismantle that intricate web of extraterritorial sanctions.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana welcomes the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

We associate ourselves with the statements delivered today by the representatives of Yemen, Egypt and Malawi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the African Group, respectively.

As in the past, Ghana has asked for the floor to join other speakers in expressing its concern at the continued imposition and implementation of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States. Last year, members of the Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favour of resolution 64/6, calling for an end to this blockade. The strong solidarity demonstrated year after year in the Assembly speaks for itself — those restrictions against a Member State by a Member State should end.

In fulfilment of Ghana's commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in international law, we have steadfastly refrained from promulgating and enforcing laws whose extraterritorial effects adversely affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and their freedom of trade and navigation. Indeed, Ghana and Cuba enjoy excellent bilateral relations, based on our shared goals and responsibilities towards an equitable world in the spirit of cooperation and multilateralism.

Our long-standing cooperation with Cuba in the areas of health, education and sports continues to expand, and currently there are more than 200 Cuban medical professionals working in hospitals across Ghana and also teaching in some of our universities. Cuba continues to offer scholarships to Ghanaian students to study in Cuba in sectors that are deemed critical to the development agenda pursued by the Government of Ghana.

The embargo, in place for more than a half century, has taken its toll on the well-being of the ordinary people of Cuba, women and children. They are counting on the support of the rest of the world for an end to the embargo, which has had a debilitating effect on their lives. Ghana has chosen to offer that support today in the spirit of fellow feeling for our brothers and sisters in Cuba, and urges the United States to end its embargo.

Mr. Goddard (Barbados): Barbados wishes to associate itself with the statements by the representatives by Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter call for respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, the right of peoples to self-determination, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations among States. The maintenance of international peace and security and the peaceful coexistence of States require that all Member States adhere to the rule of law, including the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

For those reasons, Barbados opposes the imposition of unilateral punitive measures, especially where they involve the extraterritorial application of legislation that violates international law and restricts freedom of trade and navigation and the sovereignty and freedom of States. Barbados views the continued imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against the Republic of Cuba as a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The Government of Barbados fully embraces Cuba as an important partner in the Caribbean region and remains committed to a policy of constructive engagement with its Government and people. We fully respect its sovereign rights and support its full integration into the hemisphere. We do not believe that efforts to isolate Cuba or measures that create greater hardship for the Cuban people, such as the decades-long economic embargo, will foster change in that country.

The embargo inhibits the development of normal economic and cultural relations. It distorts trade and investment flows and impedes legitimate business opportunities among neighbouring States. Furthermore, as the response of the United Nations Development Programme in the report of the Secretary-General states:

> "The impact of the embargo can be observed in all spheres of the country's social and economic activities, affecting opportunities for national and local development and creating economic hardship." (*A/65/83, p. 121*)

Barbados maintains excellent relations both with the United States of America and with Cuba and places great value on its long-established and friendly relations with both countries. In that spirit, we join the international community in calling for an immediate end to the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba and its people. We further urge the Government of the United States of America to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Cuba aimed at normalizing relations with Cuba. Such a step would remove a source of tension and conflict and would improve the prospects for peace, development and cooperation within our region.

In support of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, as in previous years, Barbados will vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/65/L.3) before us today.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/65/L.3.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Serious and imminent dangers threaten the existence of our species. To preserve human life, we must preserve peace. The use of only a small part of the world's enormous nuclear arsenal would mean the end of the species. The only guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used by any State or any individual is their destruction, along with the generation of conventional weapons of an almost similar lethal power developed of late.

The only solution is disarmament. To survive, a leap in humanity's awareness is crucial. That is possible only through the dissemination of truthful information on such issues, which most politicians conceal or ignore, which the press do not publish and which for the people are so horrendous that they seem unbelievable.

We are in a new era, and in our opinion, it is for this General Assembly of the United Nations to lead, with utmost urgency — and as Fidel Castro ceaselessly asks — a world mobilization to demand respect for the right of human beings and of peoples to live. Let us build a different world order. Let us institute a common ethic based on human solidarity and justice. Let us find a solution to conflicts through dialogue and cooperation. Let selfishness and plundering, which lead to war and the use of force, cease. In the face of the serious threat, let us put aside that which confronts us or divides us and let us unite to save peace, the planet and the life of future generations.

Under those circumstances in particular, the United States policy against Cuba does not have any ethical or legal basis, credibility or support. That is demonstrated by the more than 180 votes in the Assembly, which in recent years have called for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade. In the Secretary-General's report made available to us (A/65/83), more than 180 countries and agencies of the United Nations system document their opposition to that policy.

The rejection by Latin America and the Caribbean is forceful and unanimous. The Unity Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Cancún in February 2010, stated that resolutely. The leaders of the region have conveyed that directly to the current American President. It is clear that the express rejection of the blockade and the Helms-Burton Act characterizes, as few items do, the political heritage of the region.

Equally unequivocal views have been endorsed by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Ibero American summits, the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean summits, the African Union, the summits of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and virtually any group of nations that has declared its adherence to international law and to observance of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

There is broad and growing consensus in American society and the Cuban emigrants in that country against the blockade and in favour of a change of policy towards Cuba. Recent polls show that 71 per cent of United States citizens advocate the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States, while 64 per cent of them and a similar proportion of Cuban residents in south Florida oppose the Cuba travel ban, which violates their citizens' rights.

As with other issues, two years after the United States President announced a new beginning with Cuba, the facts confirm that nothing has changed. The President has not used his extensive privileges to relax the blockade. The sanctions against Cuba remain intact and are strictly implemented.

The economic siege was tightened in 2010, and its daily impact continues to be seen in all aspects of life in Cuba. Its consequences are particularly serious in areas that are sensitive for the population, such as health and food. Cuban ophthalmologic services cannot perform transpupillary thermotherapy, which is done through a surgical microscope, to treat children suffering from retinoblastoma, that is, cancer of the retina. It is impossible to obtain the equipment for that treatment, which can only be bought from the American company Iris Medical Instruments. Without that technology, it is impossible to treat a retina tumour and to save a child's affected eye.

Cuban children have no access to a medicine called Sevofluorane, the most advanced general inhalation anaesthetic agent, that is, an anaesthetic to operate on children, because its manufacturer, the American company Abbott, is not allowed to sell to Cuba. Nor can an optical coherence tomographer be obtained from the German company Carl Zeiss to examine the retina and the optical nerve because it has components supplied by the American company Humphrey.

The prevailing onerous and discriminatory conditions for purchases of American foodstuffs — which are supposedly protected as a humanitarian exception, while all international trade standards are violated — resulted in the dramatic reduction of those operations in the past year. That reality harms not only our people, but also American farmers.

It would be untruthful for anyone in this Hall to again describe as a trading partner a country to which Cuba cannot sell a single dose of medicine or a single gram of nickel.

Although Washington has very selectively authorized some cultural, academic and scientific exchanges, they are still subject to severe restrictions, and many such projects could not be carried out because licences, visas and other permits were denied. It is not widely known that Cuban artists are prohibited from receiving payment for their performances in this country.

Persecution with regard to Cuban property and assets and commercial and financial transfers to and from Cuba or those involving institutions or individuals based in our country has intensified. In the past year, Treasury and Justice Departments fines on firms of their country and Europe for transactions with Cuba, among other States, total more than $800 million. In a clear escalation, the American Government has also appropriated transfers in currencies of third countries, such as the euro. The confiscation of a transfer of more than €107,000 belonging to the company Cubana de Aviación, which was made through the Banco Popular Español from Madrid to Moscow, was true theft.

The direct economic damage caused to the Cuban people by the implementation of the blockade in the past 50 years exceeds $751 billion dollars at that currency's current value.

Despite universal rejection of that policy, high officials of that Government have reiterated that it will remain unchanged. On 2 September, President Obama himself ratified the sanctions against Cuba, referring to the alleged national interest of the United States. However, everyone knows that the White House continues to pay more attention to the well-funded special interests of a tiny minority that has made the policy against Cuba a very profitable business.

It is clear that the United States has no intention whatsoever of lifting the blockade. There is no sign that the Government has any will to dismantle the most irrational aspects of what is already the most comprehensive and long-lasting set of sanctions and coercive economic measures ever applied against any country. Traditionally, whenever the pretexts brandished as alleged obstacles to lifting the blockade against Cuba collapse, new excuses replace them in order to justify the continuation of a policy that is unsustainable from every viewpoint.

According to several news agencies, very recently, on 19 October, President Obama described all the practices that, in his view, are currently taking place in Cuba as insufficient and made any new step conditional on internal changes that they would like to see in our country. The President is wrong to assume that he has the right to interfere and to rate processes taking place in Cuba today. It is regrettable that he is so misinformed and ill advised.

The transformations that we Cubans are embarking on today are in tune with our aspirations and the sovereign decisions of our people. They seek to update our economic model and make it efficient, to improve our society, extend our culture and develop our socialism. Those changes do not seek to appease the desires or satisfy the interests of the United States Government, which have always been contrary to those of the Cuban people. For the super-Power, any process that does not lead to the establishment of a regime subordinated to its interest will be inadequate. But that is not going to happen, because many generations of Cubans have dedicated and continue to dedicate the best of their lives to defending the sovereignty and independence of Cuba.

The United States Government has also ignored the many declarations and proposals submitted by the Cuban Government — both in public and in private — that bear witness to our willingness to establish a serious and constructive dialogue under conditions of equality and with full respect for our independence.

No response has been given to the new cooperation projects proposed by the Cuban Government in the course of the year 2010, aimed at making progress in areas of common interest such as the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism, the protection of the environment, the prevention of natural disasters, including addressing possible accidents that may result from oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. An opportunity to advance in areas of mutual benefit to our peoples has, once again, been missed. On the contrary, the United States Government has continued its arbitrary practices of adding Cuba's name to spurious lists, including those of States that allegedly sponsor international terrorism, produced by the State Department to classify the behaviour of other nations. That country does not have the moral authority to draft such lists; as a rule, its name should appear at the top of them all. There is no reason whatsoever to include Cuba on any of those lists.

The United States Government likewise has upheld the unjust conviction against the five Cuban antiterrorist fighters who have been imprisoned for more than 12 years and whose cause has inspired broad solidarity within the international community. Cuba, which has been and is still a victim of State terrorism, calls for that Government to put an end to the double standards and impunity enjoyed in its own territory by the confessed perpetrators of acts of terrorism that were organized as part of the anti-Cuban policy of that country, which was conceived to destabilize our country during the 1960s and which included sabotage, kidnapping, assassination and armed aggressions. That would be a genuine contribution to the international struggle against the scourge of terrorism.

It is both outrageous and abnormal that the policy of sanctions and subversion applied by the United States against Cuba continues to be guided by the thinking contained in the memorandum by the former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Lester Mallory, written on 6 April 1960, which was declassified a few years ago. I quote:

> "The majority of Cubans support Castro [...] There is no effective political opposition [...] The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support [from the Government] is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship.
>
> Every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life [...] denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

This quote reveals a cruel and aggressive policy, absolutely contrary to international law, that this Government insists on maintaining, knowing that it causes harm and suffering and violates the human rights of an entire people.

This is not a bilateral issue, as is constantly repeated by representatives of the United States. Its distinct extraterritorial character is endorsed by laws, and there are many examples of the implementation of coercive measures against citizens and entities from third countries.

The blockade, given its nature and scope, qualifies as an act of genocide under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948, and also as an act of economic warfare, in accordance with the Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War, adopted in 1909. It is a hostile and unilateral act that should be ceased unilaterally.

Once again, on behalf of the people of Cuba, I ask the representatives of all the countries gathered here to vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, which I am honoured to present, entitled "Necessity of

ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

We Cubans feel proud of our work. Although this economic warfare causes hardships, the fact that has not taken a toll on human lives or managed to cause widespread and traumatic harm to our people is thanks to the efforts and sacrifices made by Cubans and the willingness and determination of its Government.

Although the economic persecution constitutes the main obstacle hindering the development of our country and the improvement of the living standards of our people, Cuba shows undeniable results in the eradication of poverty and hunger; in health and education indices, which serve as a global point of reference; the promotion of gender equality; the freedom and equal well-being of Cubans; social consensus; the democratic participation of citizens in the country's decisions; the reversal of environmental degradation and the development of international cooperation with about 100 countries of the third world.

A few weeks ago Cuba was able to declare in this Hall that it had largely and exceptionally complied with the Millennium Development Goals. Such results are still a utopia for a large segment of the population on this planet.

We Cubans face our historical destiny with optimism, commitment and creativity. We are inspired by the feelings of peace, justice and solidarity that have characterized our people and the friendship that the whole world feels for our free and rebellious island. Cuba will continue to be ready to enter into peaceful and respectful relations with the United States, as it has with the overwhelming majority of the international community and the entire hemisphere.

Cuba will never cease to denounce the blockade or to demand its people's legitimate right to live and work for its socio economic development under conditions of equality, in cooperation with the rest of the nations and without economic siege or external pressures.

Cuba expresses its gratitude to the international community for its firm solidarity with our people, convinced that, someday, justice will be served and that this draft resolution will then no longer be necessary.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/65/L.3.

In that connection, I have two requests to speak in explanation of vote before the vote. Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Godard (United States of America): The United States of America, like most Member States, is firmly committed to supporting the desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their country's future.

The United States of America, like all Member States, has the sovereign right to conduct its economic relationships with other countries as it sees fit. The United States economic relationship with Cuba is a bilateral issue and part of a broader set of relations meant to encourage a more open environment in Cuba and increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Respect for those rights and freedoms are part of this Organization's core values. We should not lose sight of that in a debate mired in the rhetorical arguments of the past and focused on tactical differences — a debate that does nothing to help the Cuban people.

My delegation regrets that the delegation from Cuba continues, year after year, to inappropriately and incorrectly label United States trade restrictions on Cuba as an act of genocide. Such an egregious misuse of the term diminishes the real suffering of victims of genocide elsewhere in the world. Additionally, those who charge the United States sanctions as being the cause of deprivation among the Cuban people should be reminded that the United States holds no restriction on humanitarian aid to Cuba and remains Cuba's largest provider of food.

The United States sold $533 million in agricultural products, medical devices, medicine and wood to Cuba in 2009. In agricultural products alone, the United States exported $526 million in goods to Cuba. Once again, in 2009, Cuba reported that the United States was its fifth largest trading partner. The United States in 2009 also authorized $237 million in private humanitarian assistance in the form of gift parcels filled with food and other basic necessities,

non-agricultural humanitarian donations and medical donations.

It is equally important to note that the United States has demonstrated that we are prepared to engage the Government of Cuba on issues that affect the security and well-being of both our peoples. In April 2009, President Obama stated that the United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba, but there is a longer journey that must be travelled to overcome the decades of mistrust. Over the past 21 months, the United States has begun to make progress on the vision that the President has outlined. We lifted restrictions on family visits and remittances and expanded the amounts of humanitarian items that the American people can donate to individuals in Cuba. The United States has enhanced the ability of United States telecommunication companies to pursue agreements to provide service to Cuba and has made it easier for United States agricultural producers to pursue contracts with Cuban buyers. Furthermore, we have resumed bilateral discussions on migration, we have initiated talks to re establish direct mail service between the United States and Cuba, and we have increased artistic and cultural exchanges between our countries, consistent with our long-standing support for freedom of expression. In the wake of the tragic earthquake in Haiti, the United States coordinated with Cuba to address the medical needs of Haitians as part of the international relief efforts there.

President Obama has stated publicly that the release of political prisoners and economic reforms are positive steps for the Cuban people. The United States hopes to see the fulfilment of those promises soon, as well as a broader opening by the Cuban Government signalling its willingness to engage constructively with its own people. However, it is the view of the United States that a new era in United States-Cuban relations cannot be fully realized until the Cuban people enjoy the internationally recognized political and economic freedoms that this body has done so much to defend in other countries around the world.

My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/65/L.3. Indeed, the United States believes that it is high time for this body to focus its energies on supporting the Cuban people in their quest to freely decide their own future and move beyond the rhetorical posturing that this draft resolution represents.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua will explain why it is going to vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3, presented by comrade Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, whom we thank for having updated the General Assembly on the harm and damage that President Barack Obama's Administration continues to inflict on the people of Cuba with the most criminal blockade that has existed in the history of humankind.

Before I do that, I wish to express our eternal gratitude to the people and Government of Cuba for their unconditional solidarity and for their most recent noble initiative of solidarity that was carried out in my country, Nicaragua. The President of our country has just awarded the Rubén Darío order of cultural independence to the Todos con Voz Cuban medical brigade, which completed the historic mission of diagnosing and recording all Nicaraguan brothers and sisters with disabilities throughout our national territory. I quote the words of Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua, when he made the award:

> "To the Todos con Voz medical brigade, exemplary exponents of the model of scientific development and public health, humanism and solidarity of Fidel and Raúl's Cuba, recognized as one of the best in the world and the pride of all the world's revolutionaries."

The people and Governments represented here think of Cuba as a kindred island, people and Government, and recognize Cuba for its heroism, solidarity, humanism, generosity and devotion when faced with other people's suffering, for its readiness to lend a friendly hand when we need help. That is why we will once again today express ourselves to demand that the country that blockades Cuba, prevents its development and threatens those that go near it — the country which from the very first day of the Cuban revolution initiated aggression against it — cease this absurd and inhuman policy.

We meet once again today in the General Assembly to bring together the voices of the international community and to demand, for the nineteenth consecutive time, that the Government of the United States put an end to this criminal and inhuman blockade against the heroic generous people and Government of Cuba.

Any country would understand this, simply from reading the Secretary-General's report (A/65/83) on the replies of Governments and bodies of the United Nations system. All but one of us understands. Once again, the Government of the United States will be isolated in the international community. Once again, the world will stand by Cuba and its people in defence of its sovereignty and its unstoppable revolution and in demanding an end to the inhuman blockade. Latin America and the Caribbean defend Cuba with a single voice. We have closed ranks with Cuba so that the Government of the United States will reconsider and correct its historical error, which is an anachronism in our region.

Not only does the United States continue to ignore the will of the General Assembly; it has tightened the main elements of the embargo against Cuba. That is reflected in the increase in economic sanctions and the targeting of Cuban business activity and financial transactions. We can see how the chokehold policy on Cuba is being carried out to the letter by the new Obama Administration, just as previous Administrations have done. Where is the change of which so much mention was made during the campaign? There has been no change at all. This Administration is increasingly isolated in its obstinate imperial policy.

We have just heard the words of our colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, representing his worthy people and Government. He has again told us that the blockade continues to be the major obstacle to the economic and social development of his country, and that its full effects on the Cuban economy is approximately $751,363,000,000.

In addition to its criminal blockade, the United States continues its policy of State terrorism by supporting admitted terrorists who freely move through the cities of the United States, planning and carrying out terrorist actions against the people and the Government of Cuba. At the same time, the United States is assailing freedom and human rights by insisting on keeping in its jails five heroic Cuban patriots whose only crime was to defend their motherland from terrorists acts committed from the territory of the United States of America. We demand the immediate release of these five Cuban anti terrorist heroes. To them and their families we express our respect and admiration on their heroic struggle against terrorists who try to destroy Cuba and its unstoppable socialist revolution.

With our vote, we shall once again express our emphatic condemnation of the blockade against Cuba and of all coercive measures of a unilateral nature and with extraterritorial impact that contradict international law and the accepted norms of free trade. Such practices pose a grave threat to multilateralism. We will also be condemning the use of coercive unilateral measures, such as illegal sanctions against developing countries aimed at preventing them from exercising their right to determine their own political, economic and social systems.

Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/65/L.3. We call on the community of nations to once again stand by Cuba by voting in favour, thereby sending a message of peace, solidarity, respect for the Charter of the Organization and for non-interference and non-intervention and, of course, for an immediate and unilateral halt to the cruel and inhuman blockade.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.3. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau

Draft resolution A/65/L.3 was adopted by 187 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 65/6).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The European Union believes that the United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, American legislation such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 has extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. As a matter of principle, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures.

While recognizing the decision by the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, we cannot accept that unilaterally imposed measures impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba. To address this problem, the European Union Council of Ministers adopted, in November 1996, a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in Europe against the consequences of these Acts. Furthermore, at the May 1998 European Union-United States Summit held in London, a package was agreed that also sought to alleviate the problems with extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind, and an understanding regarding disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union reiterates its call on the United States to implement this agreement.

The European Union's policy towards Cuba was set out in a common position in 1996. Reaffirming the validity of this common position, the European Union, in June 2008, lifted the restricted measures imposed on Cuba in 2003. The dialogue with the authorities in Havana was resumed without preconditions and on the basis of reciprocity and non-discrimination. Full political dialogue ministerial sessions have been held with the Cuban Government to address issues of common interest, including human rights, a question at the core of relations with all third countries, including Cuba.

The European Union reaffirms its determination to pursue a results-oriented comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities as well as with representatives of civil society and peaceful pro-democracy opposition, in accordance with EU policies. The European Union reiterates the right of Cuban citizens to make decisions independently about their future.

The European Union is encouraged by the ongoing release of 52 political prisoners from the group imprisoned in 2003, and reiterates its call to the Cuban Government to unconditionally release all political prisoners. The European Union also reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to fully grant its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, including the freedom of expression and free access to information, to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and, following the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, to extend invitations to other rapporteurs to visit Cuba.

The existing restrictions on rights and freedoms undermine and offset Cuban achievements in health care and education. Similarly, domestic Cuban economic policy seriously hampers its own economic development. In this context, the European Union looks forward to the implementation of the economic reforms announced by the Cuban Government, and expresses its hope that these reforms will be extended and implemented in a manner that will address the key concerns of the Cuban population.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to the economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people. The European Union therefore believes that the lifting of the United States embargo would open up the Cuban economy to the benefit of the Cuban people.

We again express our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba that are contrary to commonly accepted rules of international trade. The European Union urges the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all the areas I have mentioned. In spite of continued concerns and criticisms about the human rights situation in Cuba, the European Union unanimously voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): As in previous years, Uruguay voted in favour of the draft resolution presented by the delegation of Cuba (A/65/L.3), adopted as resolution 65/6, since we consider that the embargo against that country is counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that it contravenes the rules of international law, in particular norms that regulate international trade and those that are binding on the members of the World Trade Organization.

The position of Uruguay is in keeping with the broader context of defending multilateralism, non-intervention and the peaceful solution of disputes, which are the fundamental principles of our diplomacy. The Eastern Republic of Uruguay has expressed on numerous occasions, and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate, that we are against the economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been maintained against Cuba, which has affected the well-being of the Cuban people.

As a matter of principle, Uruguay rejects and does not recognize in its national legislation the extraterritorial application of the domestic legislation of other States. In this regard, we condemn the application of unilateral coercive measures by the United States against Cuba. These measures constitute a form of pressure that is an obstacle to dialogue.

In voting in favour of this resolution, Uruguay would like to reiterate its commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument to resolve disputes between States and as an effective mechanism in promoting international cooperation, human rights, security and mutual understanding between peoples.

Mr. Solón (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): The blockade against Cuba has failed. Almost 50 years after the imposition of that inhuman siege, far from having isolated the small island and its heroic people, the blockade has in fact triggered the broadest possible show of international solidarity. The clearest example of that solidarity was the General Assembly's adoption, for the nineteenth time, of a resolution on this subject.

One hundred and eighty-seven countries — that is, 97.39 per cent of the Member States of the Organization — have rejected the blockade imposed by the forces of imperialism against a nation that had the courage to speak with its own sovereign voice. The resolution that has been adopted today (resolution 65/6) is a recognition of the dignity, resolve and resistance of a nation, that, in the face of adversity, has not fallen to its knees.

The United States, which claims to be the defender of liberty, violates that very fundamental principle itself through this blockade. The only thing

that this blockade does is violate the human rights of the people of Cuba and generate economic losses that have already exceeded $750 billion.

It is unacceptable to defend the extraterritorial application of a legal standard sanctioned by a State in order to govern another without the approval of that State, as is the case with the well-known Helms-Burton Act. The United States Congress cannot regulate the political life of another sovereign State. That is in absolute contravention of every founding principle of the United Nations.

In the debate preceding the adoption of the resolution, we were struck by the fact that the representative of the United States said that the blockade will end when the Cuban people enjoy the freedoms that the Government of the United States deems appropriate according to its own vision. This is a confession by the Government of the United States that it is using the blockade to impose its hegemonic vision on the Cuban people. No country has the right to impose its own vision or principles on another country. We all have an obligation to respect the sovereignty of all the Member States of the United Nations.

Cuba's response in the face of the imperialist blockade is an example for all humankind. Cuba has reacted by showing solidarity to every country of the world that has requested it. Its doctors and teachers have helped to save thousands from illiteracy, darkness and death in every region of the world. The most recent example of that solidarity is the widescale support it provided to the kindred Republic of Haiti.

The greatest success of the blockade against Cuba has been to isolate the United States, as we note here today in the General Assembly. The arrogance and the imposition of sanctions by a reactionary and imperialist minority in the United States will never defeat the countries of the world that have taken Cuba into their hearts.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): As in previous years, Angola voted in favour of resolution 65/6, which was presented to the Assembly by Minister for Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla of Cuba, whose presence in the Assembly today we welcome.

In his statement, he very vividly and clearly described to us the dramatic impact of the sanctions on the Cuban population. The result of the vote is very eloquent. I am pleased to say that Angola joins the international community once again in condemning the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We appeal for its end. The embargo, which has lasted for half a century, is a flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people.

For consecutive years, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly adopted resolutions urging all countries, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, to retract all laws and measures with extraterritorial effects that compromise the sovereignty of other States, undermine the legitimate rights and interests of entities and persons under the jurisdiction of those States and affect their freedom of trade and navigation. Regrettably, however, the long-term economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba is still in place, in violation of those resolutions and in blatant violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law. The General Assembly has today adopted a resolution — a result that is really very clear.

The changes adopted by the United States Administration in relation to a few aspects of the embargo have neither been relevant nor sufficient to lessen the scope of the economic and social problems resulting from the embargo. There is a need to continue to move towards the lifting of the embargo. We encourage the United States Government to pursue this in a positive direction. We look forward to the day when the General Assembly will no longer need to include this item on its agenda.

By adhering to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and by fulfilling all the pertinent resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, we reaffirm our commitment to the norms of international law by supporting the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic persuasion.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform members that, at 10 a.m. in this Hall on Friday, 29 October, the General Assembly will consider draft resolution A/65/L.7, entitled "Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture", jointly under agenda item 13, entitled, "Integrated and

coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields", and agenda item 115, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". I wish to remind members that, as scheduled, we will hold the joint debate on those items on Tuesday, 23 November.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.